

The Angels' Charge



Dorothy Cobbold

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"The child looked up in her face and smiled."

THE
ANGELS' CHARGE

A Story for Children

BY

GRACE MARA



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THE ANGELS' CHARGE.

CHAPTER I.

THE LOST CHILD.

ONE glorious day in early autumn the train had drawn up at one of those stations where passengers are allowed to alight and resume their journey at pleasure.

Several passengers were taking advantage of the system, among others a lady and gentleman and a bright-eyed little boy of some five years old.

By their talk it was evident they only meant to travel one stage further by rail, and pursue the remainder by steamboat. And while they partook of some refreshment, they talked of

the pleasure sailing would be in such lovely weather.

“Will we go in a boat, papa? I thought we were going in a great big ship, and you called it a boat just now. I want to go in a big ship,” said the child.

“So it is, my boy,” answered his father.

“As big as the one we came over in?”

“No, not so big as that; but big enough to hold a great many people,” answered his father.

“I wanted it to be as big as the one we came over in,” said the child; and then as a thought struck him, he asked, “Will it be big enough for me to hide in?”

“So that’s what you’re after, you monkey,” laughed his father. “Well, you may set your mind at rest; there will be plenty of room for you to hide, I’ve no doubt.”

“Little cabins like what there were on board ship?” asked Georgie.

But his father did not answer, he was en-

gaged talking to his wife—a fair, sweet-looking young lady, exceedingly delicate, evidently one little fitted to buffet with the storms and trials of the world. Well for her that she had found some one whose love would shield her from every blast so far as lay in his power! Alas, that a time was coming, and that speedily, when even his great love would be powerless to do anything but soften the blow!

But just now no shadow was on her face, as she replied to her husband's tender inquiries as to whether she felt fatigued.

"Not much," she answered, smiling brightly.

"That's right; just sit still and rest while I go and get a paper. We have quite half an hour before the next train is due."

"May I go too, mamma?" asked Georgie.
"I want to get a paper too."

"What will you do with a paper?" asked his mother; "you can't read."

"I want a funny one, with pictures in it," he said eagerly.

His mother laughed, and nodded her assent.

"There, run that way, and you will catch papa before he leaves the waiting-room," she said.

Georgie needed no second bidding, but rushed off; and his mother's eyes watched him fondly until he reached his father's side.

Outside in the station all was bustle, as the train for the south was waiting a few minutes, and the passengers were hurrying out to snatch some slight refreshment or secure a paper to while away the monotony of the journey. The carriage doors stood open, and suddenly an idea darted into Georgie's head.

"I'm going to hide just now, papa," he shouted, and darted off lest his father should see where he went.

But the noise of the station drowned his voice, and his father, who was unaware that Georgie had followed him, went on all unconscious; and after waiting a while before he could get served, he gathered together several

papers, among them one of those picture ones for Georgie which he had been so eager to have. Then he retraced his steps to the waiting-room.

“Where is Georgie?” were the first words his wife asked when Mr. Stanhope entered the waiting-room.

“Why, is he not with you? I left him here,” he answered in surprise.

“No; he followed you to get a funny paper. O Charlie, where can he be?” she said anxiously.

“Why, just outside, my dear; don’t alarm yourself,” and he turned to leave the room, adding, as his wife was about to follow him, “Stay where you are, and I’ll bring him to you immediately.”

Alas! much easier said than done.

Outside all was quiet; for the south train having departed, the bustle had subsided. But Georgie was not to be seen. His father hurried along the platform searching every-

where, and questioned the porters ; but no one had seen a little boy dressed in sailor suit, with white blouse—might have, but had paid no attention.

“ You see, sir, there are so many little chaps answer to that description,” said one of the porters, a civil, elderly man, who had at once left his work to assist in the search, and finally went off for the stationmaster, who came hurrying to the spot greatly concerned, and offered to send scouts along the line in every direction.

“ But depend upon it, sir, the child has strayed into the town, and your best plan is to go straight to the police-station, and no doubt you’ll find him there.”

Mr. Stanhope hailed the suggestion with relief. The offer to search the line had conjured up a vision of a little mangled body, almost driving him distracted. How could he face his wife with such a dread upon him ? No wonder that he assented eagerly to the stationmaster’s plan, only waiting to ask where the

police-station was, and if there was any conveyance to be had to take them there.

“The fly has just taken a party to the inn,” said the porter, “and will be back in a few minutes.”

Mr. Stanhope thanked him, and hurried back to his wife, who had come to the waiting-room door, and was watching for him, her face blanched by the terrible dread that was upon her.

“O Charlie,” she gasped, “what is it? Can’t you find him?”

“Keep up your heart, wifie,” he replied tenderly; “he has no doubt strayed into the town. We will drive immediately to the police-station, and probably find him there, if indeed we do not overtake him on the road. Poor little chap, his small legs would not carry him very quickly along.”

So saying, he hurried out to see if the fly had come back. But not one word did he say to her about the searching of the lines.

But as he followed her into the carriage, he turned and said to the stationmaster, "I will come back alone if we do not find him."

"All right, sir; I will do as I said," replied the man, understanding his reason for not wishing to speak more explicitly. "But I hope you'll find him safe and sound before that."

Oh, the agony of that short drive! How eagerly they scanned the road as they passed along! But no trace of Georgie could they see. At length they arrived at the police-station, but only to meet with fresh disappointment.

Mr. Stanhope turned with words of comfort to his wife, who had insisted upon going in with him.

"We could hardly expect to find him here. Half an hour has not elapsed since he was lost; no one could have had time to bring him yet."

"Not much," answered the police-officer, to whom he had turned as if for confirmation. "But are you sure he left the station; he may have strayed on to the—"

A warning glance from Mr. Stanhope showed him that he was thoroughly aware of the danger, while he himself completed the sentence: "Just so; as he was not in the station, he must have strayed on to the road."

"Well, sir, I will send my man to look about. I am sorry we have only one, but this is only a small place. But I'll tell you what, sir," he added; "the schoolhouse is right at the end of the street. Children are the best at finding children, and if you go there at once, they will just be getting out. If you explain the case to the schoolmaster, he can tell the children, and should any of them find when they go home that such a child has been seen, or, what is quite as likely in a small place like this, is in their home—for who knows but some of their mothers may have found him, but not be able to come here with him—should that happen, the child must come straight

here and tell me. Perhaps, sir, you might offer a small reward."

"Certainly ; anything you like. A pound ?" said Mr. Stanhope.

"Nay, sir, that is too much. A penny would bring them as fast as a pound, perhaps faster ; for they understand the value of a penny, which is more than some of them do of a pound."

"I shall not grudge a pound to any one who brings me tidings of my child," said Mr. Stanhope, while his wife eagerly seconded his words.

The driver looked somewhat astonished when told to drive to the schoolhouse as fast as he could. "I thought it was their own child they had lost," he soliloquized ; "seems now as if they wanted to get somebody else's."

Arrived at the schoolhouse, Mr. Stanhope explained his errand to the schoolmaster, who listened gravely, and with a comment on the

excellency of the suggestion, turned and told the children, adding, "Remember I shall expect each of you when you return this afternoon to be able to tell me if you have heard any tidings, and shall question each of you individually."

"Will that not give you a great deal of trouble?" asked Mr. Stanhope, as the children trooped out.

"I shall not grudge the trouble," replied the schoolmaster; and I think the look of deep gratitude Mrs. Stanhope gave him must have been ample reward.

Mr. Stanhope expressed his thanks, and asked when the children would return.

"They have an hour, but some of them will be back long before that. Will you wait until they come?" and he turned to place chairs for them.

But Mr. Stanhope declined to accept his offer, saying that they would drive to the inn, and he himself would return in about an hour.

The inn was at the other end of the long, straggling village street, and close to the police-station—a small, two-storied building, little more than a public-house. At another time Mrs. Stanhope's fastidious taste would have caused her to recoil from entering it. But just now no thought of anything save her boy entered her mind.

There was a small knot of men gathered round the door, but they drew aside respectfully and allowed them to enter. A slight murmur of pity rose from the group as they closed round the door again. In a country place news spreads quickly, and the men at once knew that they were the parents of the missing child.

Inside they were received by the landlady, a pleasant-featured, middle-aged woman, who, much to Mr. Stanhope's relief, did not seem to possess the talkative propensities so generally ascribed to the class. For his wife's sake he had dreaded a landlady

who would express her sympathy by loud lamentations.

But Mrs. M'Neill, while civil and obliging, was undemonstrative. She quietly expressed her regret that their only parlour was at present occupied, but offered a bedroom, adding, "I have no doubt the lady will prefer waiting there until you return, sir, to meeting strangers."

Mrs. Stanhope had hardly listened to what went before, but the last words roused her to a sense of what was passing. "Charlie!" she exclaimed, "you surely do not mean me to wait here alone? Indeed, I cannot!"

But much as it grieved Mr. Stanhope to add to his wife's trouble, he could not let her accompany him back to the station. So he insisted that she must remain, saying that she was quite unfit for any further exertion, which was perfectly true, and promised to return as speedily as possible.

Mrs. Stanhope did not protest further, as

she felt she was only delaying her husband ; but once left alone in the privacy of the little bedroom, her composure gave way, and the long-restrained tears broke forth. She cast herself upon the bed in a perfect paroxysm of grief, wailing between the sobs, "Georgie ! Georgie ! my darling, my boy !"

When Mr. Stanhope reached the station, he found that the search of the lines had been without result. Here, at least, no news was good news ; for had Georgie strayed on to the lines, the searchers must have come upon some trace of him. So Mr. Stanhope went on his way with a considerably lighter heart. But at the police-station no better news awaited him. Next he went to the schoolhouse, only to meet with the same result.

Quite a crowd of children were gathered round the schoolhouse door. "Nobody's seen him," shouted a little boy as he approached ; and the schoolmaster came out and confirmed

his words, and expressed his regret that it was the case.

True, indeed, it is that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." And footsore and heartsore, Mr. Stanhope turned away. Nothing now remained for him to do but return to the police-station and consult the officer as to what further means could be taken to prosecute the search, and then carry the sad tidings to his wife, and make arrangements to remain at the inn overnight; for, of course, to pursue their journey was out of the question.

CHAPTER II.

SAFELY GUARDED.

THE autumn sun, which had shone down so brilliantly at noon on that little station in the Highlands, was setting gloriously in the west as the Midland train, having left Liverpool in its rear, drew up at one of the side stations.

An elderly lady and gentleman, who were awaiting it, entered a first-class compartment. Pleasant-looking they both were, the lady particularly so, she had such a gracious, gentle look on her face—a face which any one might trust, and which drew little children to her instinctively.

“Look, David,” she exclaimed, and her

voice was sweet and gentle, "what a lovely child!" and she pointed to a little boy fast asleep among the cushions; "and all alone, the little darling."

"As enthusiastic as ever where children are concerned, Grace," said her husband in a good-natured, bantering tone. "The child's mother was hardly safe to leave him alone. She wouldn't had she known who was coming to take possession of the carriage. You'll want to make off with him next, gipsy-fashion."

So saying, he buried his head in the folds of his evening paper, leaving his wife to feast her eyes on the sleeping child.

Presently the signal was given for the train to start, and he looked up.

"Whoever that child belongs to had better have a care, or they will be left behind," and he rose and looked out. But no hurrying figure met his gaze. Just then the train started. It was a long one, and from their

place in the centre it was impossible for him to attract the guard's attention.

"What's to be done?" he said, turning to his wife. "There is no sign of any one. Can he have been left behind by some careless nurse?"

"Surely not; no one could be so thoughtless and wicked," she replied. "See, David, he is awaking. Poor little man!"

She was quite right; the child was awake. First he moved a little, and, sitting up, began rubbing his eyes; finally looked all around. But he showed no signs of either surprise or fear; instead, he exclaimed quite delightedly,—

"O grandma, you here! And grandpa too. How funny!"

And without waiting for a word on their part, he scrambled down from his seat, and ran into the old lady's lap, holding up his mouth for a kiss.

Who could resist such an appeal? Cer-

tainly not an old lady devotedly fond of children. Mrs. Granger kissed him over and over again, whispering to her husband, "He thinks I am his grandmother," and in her delight she almost forgot the gravity of the case.

Meanwhile the train sped on its way.

"Come," said Mr. Granger, "we must find out who the child is, and what has become of his people;" and turning to the child, he asked, "What's your name, little man?"

The child looked surprised, raised his eyes, knitted his brows, and pouted, but did not answer. It was evident that he was in doubt about the old gentleman's identity, probably could not reconcile him with his recollection of his grandfather.

"Let me ask him," whispered Mrs. Granger; and stooping down and kissing his forehead, she said softly, "Grandma's boy."

The child looked up in her face and smiled. That was a name he knew

“Grandma’s boy,” she repeated, “is going to show how clever he is, and tell grandpa his name.”

“Georgie Stanhope,” he replied at once.

She smiled, and her husband said,—

“You’re always right where children are concerned, Grace.”

After that, a few more judicious questions elicited the whole story from him. Not that he could tell much, but what he could he told quite readily—how he had hid in the carriage, and the train had gone off; and papa was to find him, and he hadn’t found him yet. And Georgie laughed gleefully—no thought of danger had crossed his mind.

“You hid in the carriage, and then the train went off?” said Mr. Granger.

Georgie nodded. “Yes, I hided in the carriage.”

“But what put it into your head to hide?” asked Mr. Granger.

“I used to, board ship, and papa said I

might again ; for we are going to sail again. I like sailing."

"Do you? How long were you on board ship?" asked Mr. Granger, to see if by any means he could throw any light on the child's antecedents.

"A long time, days and days," replied Georgie.

"Where did you come from?"

"From 'Meckica."

"From America?" questioned Mr. Granger.

"Yes, you know, grandpa."

Georgie had by this time made up his mind as to the old gentleman's identity. The many changes he had passed through since he left America had dimmed his remembrance. That he showed no surprise at meeting his supposed grandparents was more remarkable. But young children cannot connect time and space, nor reason about circumstances ; instead, they trust implicitly, especially those who have been cherished all their lives as Georgie had.

“And when you go on board again, are you going back to America?” asked Mr. Granger.

“I suppose so,” answered Georgie sleepily, for all this questioning was tiring him.

But Mr. Granger had still another question to ask.

“Had you just come out of the train when you went back and hid in it?”

“Yes; but we had something to eat first, and papa was going to get a paper when I hid.”

“I thought as much,” said Mr. Granger, turning to his wife and speaking in an undertone. “The child has evidently accompanied his parents to Liverpool for the purpose of embarking in the *Europa*, which sails to-day, and slipped away from them there, and been carried on. That is how no one was looking for him when we started. The search would be at Liverpool.”

“How clever you are, David!” said his wife.

“How you do put things together!”

Which was quite true. Only it did not

enter Mr. Granger's head how much further Georgie had travelled that day. How could it? He had no means of knowing; nor yet that the carriage they were in, along with two others, had been left by the north train at Carlisle, and joined on to the Liverpool one there. Strangely enough, no one had entered that particular compartment until they did so.

"What will you do?" asked Mrs. Granger, after a pause.

"Well, the only thing seems to be to take the young gentleman back to Liverpool by the next train. I could send him back in charge of the guard, but with his proclivity for hiding I had rather see to him myself. Providence seems to have placed him in our hands."

"O David, I am so thankful you are going to see to him yourself! I couldn't bear to let him out of my sight without knowing what was going to become of him."

"I knew you couldn't, Grace," said Mr. Granger, smiling. "Well, never fear; I'll see

him safe before I leave him, or I'll bring him back to you."

Little did Mr. Granger think that the words spoken in jest were to come true.

"Little darling!" said Mrs. Granger. "I could find it in my heart to keep him, if I didn't know that somebody else's heart would be breaking for the want of him."

And then she bethought herself of some sweet biscuits she had in her handbag, and opening it she gave two or three to Georgie, who, to tell the truth, stood greatly in need of something, for he had eaten nothing since twelve o'clock except a bun, which he had in his hand when he entered the carriage. In fact, it was the bun that had kept him contented until he fell asleep, and so prevented him being discovered sooner.

"Nice biscuits, grandma," he remarked, as he munched away at them. "I'se hung'y."

"Poor little man! Could you eat some more?" asked Mrs. Granger.

Georgie was by no means a greedy child ; besides, he was accustomed to too many luxuries for biscuits to be any great treat. But he was very hungry, so he nodded emphatically as he answered, "Please, grandma."

Kind-hearted Mrs. Granger would have given him the whole bagful, but he would not take them, only another two, saying,—

"The rest are for you and grandpa."

If anything was needed to completely win Mrs. Granger's heart, that last remark did it. And when the train stopped, it was with the greatest reluctance that she allowed her husband to lead him away to catch the up-train, for which they were just in time.

She watched the train out of sight, then turned with a sigh and entered a comfortable carriage which was waiting, saying to the coachman as she did so the single word "Home."

The coachman, grey-haired and elderly, like

his master, touched his hat, but, with the freedom that comes of many years' service, said before starting,—

“I thought the master was coming, ma'am.”

“No: something occurred to take him to Liverpool; he will come by a later train,” replied Mrs. Granger; but her mind was so occupied by what had occurred that she said no more.

The coachman touched the reins, and the well-bred horses set off at the regular, albeit somewhat leisurely, pace they had grown accustomed to. For with Mr. and Mrs. Granger everything seemed to go at a leisurely pace; they were in the autumn of life, and had slipped away from the stir and bustle of the work-a-day world.

No wonder that the incident of the afternoon dwelt in Mrs. Granger's mind, breaking in as it did in the monotony of her usually quiet life—the more so because her heart was very tender towards children, for the sake

of the little ones she had long ago laid to rest in the churchyard. Alas, none had been spared to grow up to be a comfort to her husband and herself in their old age!

But to return to Mr. Granger and Georgie, who had by this time reached Liverpool, where, to Mr. Granger's surprise, there had been no rumour of a child lost. Strong, however, in his conviction, he did not waste time, but hailing a cab drove at once to the docks, only to find that the *Europia* had sailed.

"What! is it possible the child's parents would go without him?" he exclaimed to the official who had given him the information, together with some more to the effect that there had been some commotion about a child a-missing just at the last.

"But I heard it had been found aboard, sir," said the man.

"That cannot be, seeing I have got him here," said Mr. Granger. "What is to be done?"

"Can't say," said the man slowly, as if revolving the situation in his own mind. "Perhaps it wasn't the same child—I did hear it was a little girl."

"Who will this child belong to, then?" asked Mr. Granger; "he says his parents were going on board."

"Perhaps his story's neither more nor less than a plant," replied the man.

"A what?" exclaimed Mr. Granger.

"A story got up to take you in, I mean. Whoever left him in the carriage told him what to say."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Mr. Granger; "a child of his age couldn't tell a made-up story if he tried. Besides, he had no story to tell; I got it from him word by word."

The man looked puzzled, and, finding there was no further help to be got from him, Mr. Granger turned to the cabman and told him to drive to the police-station.

On explaining his errand, he found, much to

his indignation, that the officials there took much the same view of the matter as the one at the docks had done. They offered to take charge of the child and hand him over to the proper authorities.

But this Mr. Granger would not hear tell of, and, handing his card, said,—

“I suppose I am doing nothing illegal in declining to give the child up, except to his proper guardians. That is my address.”

“Certainly not, sir,” said the inspector civilly; “and I will communicate with the authorities at Queenstown, that they may make inquiries as soon as the vessel touches there, and let you know the result.”

Mr. Granger thanked him, and turned to leave.

“I thought we were to find papa and mamma here?” said Georgie, as they left the room. “I want mamma,” and he pouted. Poor little man, he was beginning to grow tired.

“ Won’t grandma do for to-night ? ” said Mr. Granger. “ I’ll take you to her, and we’ll see about mamma to-morrow.”

“ Yes,” said Georgie ; “ I love grandma, and I like to stay with her. I used to often in ‘ Meckica, you know, grandpa.”

CHAPTER III.

GEORGIE'S NEW HOME.

I DON'T think that in her heart Mrs. Granger regretted seeing her husband return with Georgie still unclaimed. Indeed she blamed herself for not doing so and pitying the bereaved parents more. That he had been left in the carriage wilfully, she, as well as her husband, refused to believe. Could she have thought so, she would have been quite happy, for Georgie had completely won her heart.

Nor was that wonderful; he was such a bright, merry little fellow, and so frank, that he soon became perfectly at home with every one. And what a difference he made in that

hitherto quiet household, with his bright, happy ways and innocent laughter ! Not that he forgot his parents ; but the wandering life they had been leading, together with the fact that this was not the first time he had been parted from them, tended to reconcile him to their absence more easily than might have been expected. That they would come for him some time he never doubted ; besides, was he not with his grandparents, as he supposed ? And any stranger seeing him with them would have believed it to be the case.

The Grangers' house was an ideal home for a child : a low, rambling house, with roses and honeysuckle growing up the walls and peeping in at the windows, set in an old-fashioned garden, a garden which contained such a wonderful number of berry bushes, and where the roses were always in bloom—at least so it seemed to Georgie. Then in a shady corner at the foot of the garden was Nero's kennel. Nero was a splendid Newfoundland dog, gentle

as a lamb, when once he had satisfied himself as to new acquaintances, and so strong that he could carry Georgie on his back, and, after he had grown accustomed to him, often did, for they were soon fast friends. Then there were the horses, and I never knew a little boy yet who did not love horses. And the coachman was very good natured, and allowed Georgie to come about the stables as much as he liked.

Indeed, all the servants about the place made much of him, doubtless partly because their master and mistress did so, but chiefly, I believe, because his friendless condition appealed to the better part of their nature.

So altogether Georgie ran as great a risk of being spoiled as ever child did; for as the days passed by and no answers came to the advertisements Mr. Granger had caused to be inserted in *The Times* and local papers, the chances of finding his parents grew ever less likely.

Nor did Georgie ever throw any more light on the subject, unless a remark he made one day when out driving could be reckoned as doing so. Something led him to say that he had climbed a hill—a high hill, he called it—and Mr. Granger, ever on the alert, began to question him.

“It was a high hill, and I sat on papa’s shoulder while we were going up,” replied Georgie.

Mr. Granger laughed, and said that was one way to climb a hill.

“There was a lot of water near it like the sea, but papa said it wasn’t the sea; he called it a lock.”

“A lake,” corrected Mr. Granger; and turning to his wife, he said, “I wonder it did not strike me before. His parents have no doubt been travelling in the Lake district, and have most likely returned there to search. I shall put advertisements in the Westmoreland papers at once.”

And so he did ; but neither to them nor to those in the local papers came any answer. A week lengthened into a fortnight, and still the mystery remained unsolved.

There was one acquaintance Georgie made in his new home whom I have not found time to mention yet. This was the gardener's assistant, a lad of thirteen ; for the gardener, like the coachman, was elderly, and could not do the work without help.

Timothy was the lad's name, but, alas ! he bore no resemblance to the Timothy of old, who was trained in the faith from his youth upwards. No, Timothy Smith—or Tim, as he was usually called—was, if not by nature evilly disposed, one in whom the ill had been allowed to grow unchecked, until it had become second nature.

In fact, the Grangers had only taken him into their service because they pitied him in his unhappy home, where the best that could be said of his parents was, that nothing worse

than drinking had been openly laid to their charge, but there were other grave evils suspected.

Had there been any one in their house whom Tim could influence, the Grangers would never have taken him into their service, but until Georgie came there was no one. After that they did indeed consult as to whether Tim should be allowed to remain ; but as they knew nothing against him, their sense of justice would not allow them to turn him away ; besides, it was quite uncertain how long Georgie would remain with them.

Mrs. Granger, indeed, would have laid commands on Georgie not to speak to Tim, but Mr. Granger would not hear of it.

“Nay, Grace, that is not like your usual kindness, to let the poor lad see he is shunned.”

“But I do not feel happy when Georgie is with him ; you know what an upbringing his has been, and I fear he is deceitful.”

“But Georgie is as open as the day. Who

knows, Grace, but what he may teach Tim a lesson, and I don't see any harm he can get from him," said Mr. Granger.,

So Georgie was allowed to run about unchecked; and there was nothing he liked better than to follow Tim about the garden, and help him to weed or water the plants.

At first Tim was quite pleased to have him, and made much of him, as did the rest of the servants; but by-and-by the spirit of mischief got the better of him, and he began to play tricks on him, such as setting him to water a bed of flowers that ought not to be watered just then, or gather up the fallen leaves, while he would cunningly strew them about again as fast as Georgie gathered them. But Georgie was good natured, and took everything in excellent part; and had Tim stopped there all would have been well, but he began to practise on Georgie's credulity by telling him stories. Always accustomed to being openly dealt with, Georgie was very unsuspecting, and would be-

lieve unhesitatingly anything Tim told him. And as Tim was gifted with a lively imagination, the flights his fancy took were wonderful, such as that the fairies danced under the trees at night, and that when the rain fell they took a bath, and other stories neither so innocent nor harmless.

"But how do you know? Have you seen them?" said Georgie one day, when Tim had told him a long story about the fairies, to which Georgie had listened in open-eyed astonishment.

"Me see them! Of course I have," said Tim. "I come out every night and watch them."

"Oh, how I wish I could see them!" said Georgie. "I should like to see them."

"Well, if you look out of your bedroom window to-night, you'll be sure to see them," said Tim. "Just look right under yon big tree; but mind it must be quite dark."

Georgie listened eagerly, and nodded ear-

nestly. But next day he went to Tim in great disappointment.

"Tim," he exclaimed, "I got up last night and looked out, but I didn't see the fairies."

"Of course you wouldn't," answered Tim; "but they were there right enough. I saw them myself. My! didn't they dance?"

"O Tim, did you really!" exclaimed Georgie. "I wish I had. I looked out ever so long."

"But was it twelve o'clock?" asked Tim; and Georgie had to confess that he didn't know what time it was.

"It should have been twelve o'clock," said Tim sagely; "no chance of them showing themselves before that."

Just then the gardener came along, and Tim left off talking nonsense to attend to his work.

"Look here! what have you been about, Tim," asked the gardener sharply, "watering that bed of flowers and the sun right on it?"

"I didn't do it," said Tim; "it was Master

George. I told him that one under the trees, and he's gone and watered the wrong one. I can't be always watching what he does."

Now Tim knew perfectly well that Georgie had watered the bed he was told; but he thought it a fine trick to play on him, and he turned round and whispered to Georgie,—

"You'll catch it, my gentleman."

But to his surprise, the gardener spoke sharply to himself.

"You lazy rascal, setting a child to do your work, and then laying the blame upon him! See that it doesn't occur again, that's all."

And with that he went off to his hothouses, leaving Tim in no enviable frame of mind.

Georgie had looked on in open-eyed astonishment, but now he went up to Tim, saying,—

"Why did you say that you told me to water the other bed? It wasn't true."

"Get away, you little bother!" said Tim savagely; "haven't you done enough mischief?"

Georgie shrank away in amazement ; but he could not get what Tim had said about the fairies out of his head, the more so because he began to wonder if it was really true after all. Before, it would never have struck him to doubt ; but Tim had said what wasn't true about the flowers, so he couldn't be quite sure. But he determined to sit up that night and find out for himself.

When night came, he resisted all the maid's efforts to get him to go to bed ; and when she turned to Mrs. Granger, he appealed to her too.

"Do let me sit up, grandma," he said. "I want to so much."

"Heigh ! what's that ?" said Mr. Granger, waking up from his after-dinner nap—"not want to go to bed ? What for, I wonder ?"

"I want to stay up until twelve o'clock, grandpa," said Georgie, scrambling on to his knee. "Do say I may."

"Till twelve o'clock ! You'd fall asleep in

your chair, if you tried to, long before then. But what do you want to sit up so late for?" asked Mr. Granger.

"I want to see the fairies come out and dance under the big elm tree at twelve o'clock," said Georgie.

"Hey-day!" exclaimed the old gentleman, "who told you they did that?"

"Tim says he often sees them," replied Georgie.

"Does he? If he doesn't take care, I'll let him see something else, and feel it too," said Mr. Granger; while Mrs. Granger exclaimed, "I told how it would be. I was sure he would do Georgie harm."

"Not much harm yet, Grace; and I'll give him a word to-morrow," replied Mr. Granger.

"But don't the fairies come out at night?" asked Georgie. "Did you never see them, grandpa?"

"No, I never did, nor anybody else," said Mr. Granger.

"I am so sorry," said Georgie. "I wanted so much to see them."

"And I am sorry, my boy, that you should have to find out that you have been told what wasn't true," said Mr. Granger kindly.

"Yes," said Georgie slowly; "Tim does say things that aren't true."

"What else has he been saying that wasn't true?" asked Mr. Granger.

"Must I tell, grandpa?" said Georgie, looking up ingenuously to him. "You told me that only bad boys tell stories about people."

And Mr. Granger did not press him, but putting him down from his knee, said,—

"There, you young rogue, kiss grandma, and off to bed, and see you don't dream about fairies."

After Mrs. Granger had been to see Georgie safely tucked in for the night, and whisper a few words about the gentle Shepherd

who watched His little ones while they slept, she came and sat down by her husband's side.

They sat a little while in silence, and then Mr. Granger looked up and said,—

“You are troubling yourself, Grace, about Georgie.”

“I always feared Tim would do him harm, David,” she replied.

“Not much as yet, my dear; and I'll put a stop to it. It wasn't as if he had tried to frighten him by telling him tales about ghosts; that I would not have forgiven.”

Had Mr. Granger only known it, that was precisely what Tim had done, only substituting the more harmless story when Georgie refused to believe the other.

“Ghosts!” he would say in his bright, intelligent way; “I never heard of ghosts. You must mean fairies, only nobody ever saw fairies.”

Next morning Mr. Granger spoke to Tim very severely.

“Little beggar!” muttered Tim under his

breath, as Mr. Granger turned away, "to go and peach upon a fellow."

But Mr. Granger heard him, and turned upon him sharply.

"You are quite mistaken. On the contrary, Master George asked not to be forced to tell something else you had said which wasn't true; you know best yourself what it was. And remember if anything of the kind occurs again, you shall not have another chance; so you will have yourself to blame—I have given you fair warning," and Mr. Granger walked away, leaving Tim full of angry thoughts towards Georgie, and wondering how he could "pay him back," as he phrased it, for he would not acknowledge that he himself was alone to blame.

Now when any one begins to plot evil against another, he will not long lack the opportunity of carrying it out. The father of evil takes care of that, and so Tim found.

Before very long Georgie came running along the path on the way to Nero's kennel. Tim waited until he was quite close upon him, and then turning round quickly, slipped the rake he was using right under his foot. Of course Georgie tripped and fell.

"O Tim, why did you do that?" he said, as he picked himself up and rubbed his brow ruefully.

"Me do it!" said Tim. "Why, you fell over the rake."

"Yes, but I wouldn't if you hadn't pushed it out and tripped me," replied Georgie.

"Me tripped you! You'll best go and tell that next," said Tim. "I'll whack you if you do;" for although he had meant to trip Georgie, he had certainly not meant him to find out that he had done it intentionally, and was terrified as to what would be the result if Georgie told.

"No, I won't tell; but I did see you," said Georgie, as he walked soberly away.

Poor little man, it was one of the first times he had met with underhand treatment, and he couldn't understand it at all.

But when Mrs. Granger questioned him about the lump on his brow, he only replied,—

“I tripped as I was running down to see Nero.”

“You shouldn't run so fast, Georgie,” said Mrs. Granger. “You wouldn't get to Nero any sooner by falling;” and then she sent him away to have his brow bathed.

After that Georgie fought shy of Tim for some time, while Tim on his part was in terror lest the cause of Georgie's fall should come to light, so he let him alone for a while; but when he found he was not discovered he grew bolder, and sought for some new means of tormenting him. The most practical he could think of were stories about little boys whose parents had gone away and left them and never come back again.

At first Georgie did not mind him, declaring stoutly,—

“My papa and mamma will come for me ; I know they will.”

But by degrees Tim's tales began to have effect, so much so that Mrs. Granger wondered what ailed Georgie, he moped so. She fancied he must be ill. But when she questioned him she could get no answer, until one day when he was sitting on her lap he burst into tears, and hiding his face on her breast, sobbed,—

“O grandma, will papa and mamma never come back again ? I want mamma ! I want mamma !”

“My poor little darling,” said Mrs. Granger, bending over him and kissing him fondly, “your papa and mamma will come for you ; I am sure they will. God will send them to us.”

And Mrs. Granger spoke her own belief, for she had never for one moment doubted

that the Stanhopes would one day claim their child.

Nor was it long before she succeeded in comforting Georgie. His doubts were easily dispelled, his sorrows easily chased away.

“The tear down childhood’s cheek that flows
Is like the dewdrop on the rose :
When once the summer breeze comes by
And shakes its stem, the flower is dry ;
Or like the snowflake on the river,
One moment seen, then melts for ever.”

But with Mrs. Granger it was different. Long after Georgie had left her, and was playing merrily, she pondered over the matter. Until now Georgie had been so perfectly contented with them. What had caused him to doubt his parents’ coming for him? So troubled was she, that when the maid came in to set the table for lunch, she spoke of it to her. And as it was she who had always put Georgie to bed, and taken special charge of him, she found a sympathetic listener.

“Well, ma’am,” answered Bessie, “I am sure I don’t want to get any one into trouble,

but I can't help thinking but that it is Tim is doing the mischief. I overheard him myself the other day when I happened to be in the kitchen garden, and would have interfered, only Master George spoke up so bravely that I thought he was taking it all in good part; but no doubt that's what is vexing him, poor little dear — not that I want to do Tim any harm," she added.

Mrs. Granger thanked her warmly for being open with her, saying,—

"Tim has been already warned that he must give up the practice of imposing false stories upon Georgie. Who knows the harm he might have done had he been allowed to go on unchecked. I am truly thankful that you have told me, Bessie."

Mrs. Granger resolved to lose no time in speaking to her husband, and immediately Georgie had left the table after lunch, she told him of the forenoon's occurrence and Bessie's suspicions.

Mr. Granger was justly indignant, and going into the garden where Tim was at work, taxed him with it.

Tim, taken unawares, knew not what to say; and when he attempted a denial, Mr. Granger checked him sternly, and reminding him of the warning he had given him, dismissed him there and then.

Turned away in disgrace from the place that had been far more a home to him than his own had ever been, Tim knew not where to go.

“I’ll get a hiding if I go home and tell, besides getting all the money taken from me,” he soliloquized, jingling the week’s wages he had received in his pocket. Luggage, of course, he had none, as he was only a day servant, and went home at night. “Catch me doing it, that’s all,” he said to himself, as he resolved to try his luck elsewhere. The most likely place he could think of was Liverpool; and thither he bent his footsteps,

on the way to which we must now leave him.

On the afternoon of the following day Mr. Granger went to Liverpool, to see if there had been any answer to his advertisements. Not that he entertained much expectation of any ; but since he had retired from business life had been rather monotonous, and he welcomed anything which caused him to go back and forward to the city again.

For a wonder he took Nero with him ; but he was exceedingly proud of his handsome dog, and wanted to show him to an acquaintance.

It was evening when he returned, and as he approached the house, something in its aspect seemed to strike him. For one thing, his wife was not watching for him—a most unusual occurrence. Nor was there any noise or laughter, as had been the rule of the day since Georgie came. However, he concluded they had gone out a drive, and, the day being

fine, had been tempted to stay out longer than usual, and rang to inquire.

It was Bessie who answered, and she seemed in a state of great excitement. Without giving him time to speak, she exclaimed,—

“O sir! have you seen him? We hoped you might.”

“Seen whom?” asked Mr. Granger. “I have just this moment returned, and the whole house seemed deserted.”

“Master George, sir. We’ve lost him, and we thought perhaps he had followed you.”

“When was that?” asked Mr. Granger, his thoughts reverting to Tim. Was it possible he had decoyed him away out of revenge? And even as he thought, he realized how very dear Georgie had become to him.

“Soon after you went away, sir; and we have been looking everywhere. Missis is in the garden now.”

Mr. Granger hastened out; but before he had gone many yards, a growl, followed by

a bark, came from the direction of Nero's kennel, and he turned to find out the cause.

Just then Mrs. Granger caught sight of him, and hastened along the path to join him, exclaiming,—

“O David, I am so thankful you have returned! What ever shall we do?”

But even as she spoke, the mystery was solved; for, passing the hedge that divides the garden from the stables, Nero's kennel was disclosed to view, and there in the front of it sat Georgie, rubbing his eyes much in the same way as they had seen him do that first day in the railway carriage, while Nero gambolled round him in delight, which his huge size made ludicrous to behold.

“O Georgie! where have you been?” she exclaimed.

“I hided, I did, and Nero found me,” he answered complacently; but looking up, he saw traces of tears on Mrs. Granger's face. Jumping up, he asked, “Are you vexed, grandma?”

and he threw his arms round her neck, and held up his face to be kissed.

Who could scold him? Certainly not Mrs. Granger; and if her husband felt inclined, he forbore for her sake.

It transpired afterwards that Georgie, feeling dull without his constant companion Nero, had bethought himself of hiding to while away the time, and where could he find a better place than Nero's kennel? and although he had heard Bessie calling, he had paid no heed, as he wished her to find him. And then he had fallen asleep; the smallness of his hiding-place and the heat together had probably made him drowsy.

"You must never do it again, Georgie," said Mrs. Granger.

And Georgie promised, remarking as he did so, "I would have come if I had heard you calling, grandma; but it was such a tapital place! I knew Bessie never would find me, she is so stoopid."

No more was said just then; but after Georgie had gone to bed, Mrs. Granger said to her husband, "Ever since Georgie was lost this afternoon, David, I haven't been able to get his poor mother out of my thoughts. Just fancy, what a state she must be in all this while! Why, until we found him, I felt as if my heart would break!"

"Yes," replied Mr. Granger, "it gave me a shock too, when I came home and heard he was lost. But I confess I do not know what more we can do than we have done. Everything has been unsuccessful, and the parents are making no sign. I am beginning to believe in the theory that he was left in the carriage intentionally after all."

"David," replied his wife earnestly, "I am sure you are mistaken. No mother could find it in her heart to desert her child."

"You judge others by yourself, Grace," he replied.

"In this case I am sure I am right," she

answered. "Don't you think, if it was put into the hands of clever people like the London detectives, they might be able to throw some light upon the matter?"

"Well, I am sure I don't know," said Mr. Granger; but he thought the matter over, and the result was that he set off next morning for London.

CHAPTER IV.

RESTORED AGAIN.

MEANWHILE we must return to the Stanhopes. How sadly the time had passed with them it is impossible to describe. Search-parties had been organized, and the country scoured for miles round, far beyond the distance that a child of five could have strayed. And there was not a farmhouse in the neighbourhood at which inquiries had not been made. Then some gipsies who had been encamped thereabouts were suspected, traced, and followed. But all in vain.

The strain had told upon Mrs. Stanhope, and she had fallen into a low fever, from which the doctor found it impossible to rouse her.

Poor Mr. Stanhope ! What between the loss of his child and anxiety on his wife's account, was it any wonder if he seldom opened a paper other than the local one ? Besides, in that remote district there were no others to be had, except at the station, and after the first day he shunned it.

Nor of all the numerous tourists who passed through on the way to the north were there many who stayed, as for the most part they pursued their journey direct. That Highland village—for it was little more—had few attractions. And any chance sojourner who heard the story of the missing child failed to connect it with the advertisement which had been appearing in *The Times*, if, indeed, he had noticed the latter at all.

Almost three weeks of uncertainty had passed away, and now a new source of anxiety had arisen. The real object of Mr. Stanhope's visit to this country had been to open a branch of the business of which he

was a partner in Liverpool. The tour in the Highlands had only been taken because he found himself with leisure, while preliminaries were arranged. But now his agents had written asking his immediate return. What was he to do? It seemed like relinquishing hope altogether to quit Scotland, and he feared the effect upon his wife. Yet duty demanded that he should return. Even were he willing to sacrifice his own interests, he had no right to do so with those of the firm. At length, unable to decide, he wrote explaining the circumstance, and asking if affairs could be arranged to permit his stay to be prolonged, but should that be impossible, promising to return.

Unwilling to add to his wife's trouble, he did not mention it to her, and was now anxiously awaiting an answer. He was sitting all alone in the little parlour, leaning on the table, his head buried in his hands, his whole attitude that of deepest dejection.

The landlady entered the room, but he did not look up until she said, "A telegram for you, sir."

He started up, and thanking her, took it and tore it open. Of course it was from Liverpool, and he feared the answer was unfavourable, otherwise there was no need for such haste. But as he read his face grew pale and his breath came in gasps. For the news that the telegram contained was no other than the advertisement which had so long remained unanswered, together with some more to the effect that, struck by the similarity, they had made inquiries, which left no room for doubt; lastly came the Grangers' address:

Sitting down again, he wrote two telegrams, one to Liverpool, the other to the Grangers, both to the effect that he would arrive there next day—sooner was impossible, or he had not delayed. And then he hurried upstairs to tell his wife the glad news, wondering the while how best he could do so without start-

ling her. He need not have feared ; joy does not kill, it is grief does that. And the sight of his face as he entered the room was enough to tell her that something had happened.

“O Charlie!” she exclaimed, “you have heard something?”

“Yes, darling, good news—so good I hardly know how to tell you.”

“Oh, tell me, tell !—anything is better than this suspense.”

“George is found, alive and well, and ere many days have passed I hope to place him in your arms again.” He paused, for his wife had grown so pale that he feared to proceed.

But she whispered,—

“Tell me all, Charlie ; I can hardly believe it is true.”

So he told her word for word what the telegram had contained, adding, “I shall start by the first train to-morrow morning.” But he was greatly startled when his wife replied,—

“I shall go with you, Charlie.”

“Impossible, Alice ; you are not fit for the journey,” he exclaimed.

“Do not say that. It would kill me to be left behind,” she answered.

Afraid of agitating her, he replied,—

“If the doctor will allow you, I shall be delighted, dearest. And, there, I hear his voice downstairs. I shall go down and tell him the news.”

“Tell him he must not prevent me going, Charlie,” she said as he left the room.

Strange to say, the doctor took the same view of the matter as his patient, believing that to be left behind would do her more harm than the journey.

The fact is, it was her child she wanted, not medicine.

“He will be the best tonic she can have, and the sooner it is allowed to take effect the better,” he said, after he had paid his customary visit to Mrs. Stanhope.

When the doctor had left, the landlady came up to offer her congratulations to Mrs. Stanhope, for the news was known in the inn. And Mr. Stanhope embraced the opportunity to pay a visit to the schoolhouse. He had not forgotten that first afternoon when the children had so readily taken up the search. And all through these three sad weeks, sometimes one, sometimes more, had come daily with offerings of wild flowers for Mrs. Stanhope, saying shyly as they laid them down,—

“Please, sir, mother bade me ask if there was any news.”

How these little offerings and kind messages had been prized! And now Mr. Stanhope hastened to tell the children the good news. After he had told it, and received three hearty cheers from the children, led by the master, he turned to him and begged a boon—no other than a holiday for the rest of the day; and when the master granted it, the children cheered again.

Then he remembered the words he had said, although it seemed very long ago—"that he should not grudge a pound if his child was found ;" and though the children had not been the means of finding him, he changed a pound into pence, though it caused him to go into every shop in the village before he managed it. Then the schoolmaster and he held races on the village green, until every penny was gone, and every child had received either one or more, as the case might be.

Then, as the shades of evening were gathering round, he went back to his wife, who was watching them from the window. Together they sat in the gloaming, their hearts full of thankfulness. Presently a bright gleam shot up into the sky, causing them to look out. It was a huge bonfire which the happy children, with the help of the villagers, had kindled right opposite, and which willing hands were plying with fresh fuel.

"Our trouble has shown us that there are

kind hearts to be found everywhere," said Mr. Stanhope.

"And a loving Father who watches over all His children, rich and poor. O Charlie, I sometimes feared that God had taken our boy from us because my heart was too much bound up in him."

"Dearest," he answered, "it will be a lesson to us both to keep ourselves from idols. But our child will not be less dear to us because we remember the Father who first gave him to us, and watched over him for us."

"Truly He must have given His angels charge over him," she answered.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT BECAME OF TIM.

NEVER, surely, had journey seemed so endless, fast train though it was. But at length they drew up at that quiet station where the carriage had met Mrs. Granger that first evening.

The carriage was again in waiting, and the grey-haired coachman came forward with a message. But ere he reached them, Georgie, who had accompanied him to the station, gave one bound, and was in his mother's arms, close folded to her breast. The coachman delivered his message, which was to the effect that his master had not returned from London, and his mistress begged to be excused coming to meet them, and had sent Master George.

How they thanked her in their hearts for her kindly consideration ; for in the first hour of meeting their child was enough. But as they drove through the country lanes, Georgie told them so much about grandpapa, and especially about grandmamma, that they were filled with thankfulness for the happy home their child had had.

“Grandmamma had a headache yesterday, she kyed so much after she heard you were coming,” said Georgie. “She said she was both glad and sorry. I think she must have been sorry because grandpapa was away.”

Little did Georgie think that the tears were caused by the thought that, now his parents were found, she must lose him. But I think Mrs. Stanhope understood.

His parents were puzzled as to why Georgie persisted in speaking of Mr. and Mrs. Granger as grandpapa and grandmamma ; and he evidently expected them to do the same.

But as the carriage drove up before the

door, and Mrs. Granger came out to meet them, it was easily explained.

“How like your mother, Charlie!” exclaimed Mrs. Stanhope.

While Georgie shouted,—

“Papa and mamma have come at last, grandmamma.”

“He took us for his grandparents from the very first,” said Mrs. Granger, “and we thought he would be happier if he did not find out his mistake.”

For answer, Mrs. Stanhope threw her arms round the old lady’s neck, while she murmured broken words of thanks. “But I can never thank—Charlie, help me,” she said, turning to her husband; but he was hardly more composed.

“Nay, I want no thanks,” said Mrs. Granger, as she took his proffered hand. “Your loss was our great gain; and had I not known that somebody was grieving for their darling, Georgie would have made me perfectly happy.”

Just then Georgie created a diversion by exclaiming,—

“I want to go back to the station with Robins to meet grandpa.”

“Will you trust him with me, wifie, and I will go with him?” said Mr. Stanhope.

And lest her husband should think that she cast the least shadow of blame upon him, Mrs. Stanhope at once consented, although she could hardly bear to let her darling out of her sight.

“An excellent plan,” said Mrs. Granger. “And come you and rest awhile; you look anything but strong.”

“I have not been well since we lost Georgie, but I will soon be all right now,” answered Mrs. Stanhope.

But after they had watched the carriage driving away, the kind-hearted old lady insisted on her lying down, seeing to her comfort as tenderly as any mother could have done. Then sitting down beside her, she told

her all the particulars which she knew she must be longing to hear—how they had found Georgie fast asleep in the railway carriage.

“And when he waked up he called me grandma, and did not seem in the least surprised to see us.”

“You are very like my husband’s mother, and Georgie often stayed with his grandparents,” said Mrs. Stanhope.

“That explains it,” said Mrs. Granger. Then she went on to tell many a little tale about his doings and sayings during the last three weeks, trifling in themselves, but oh how sweet to a mother’s ears; but not one word did she say as to how they would grieve to part with him. But his mother read between the lines, as it were, and knew without being told.

They were still talking when the carriage returned, and Georgie burst into the room, exclaiming,—

“Here’s grandpa, mamma; but he’s not

the same grandpa as I had in 'Meckica. He's different somehow," he added, as he sidled up to his mother.

So Georgie had had his doubts about his grandfather all along, but he had kept them for his mother to solve. Happy child, she did not disappoint him.

"And I have a grandpa and grandma here and in 'Meckica too!" he exclaimed. "How funny—but very nice," he added, after consideration.

"Very nice for you, you young rogue," said his father. "I don't know what you would have done without those here, at any rate." While Mrs. Stanhope explained: "My parents died while I was young, so Georgie knew none but my husband's."

And Mrs. Granger's heart went out afresh to the motherless girl—for she was little else. Might not her little Martha, who had died so many years ago, have been such another had she been spared to grow up? and Mrs.

Granger's eyes grew moist and dim. Nor were hers the only ones, for a joy so deep as filled the hearts of two of them at least is almost akin to pain.

Yet it was a happy party that sat down to dinner that evening. Georgie was allowed to sit up an hour later in honour of the occasion, and the result was that he could hardly keep his eyes open; but he rubbed them vigorously, and would not confess to feeling sleepy, till at last his father carried him off to bed.

"You will come and tuck me in, mamma," he called, as he left the room—"and grandma too. How nice, both mamma and grandma." And Georgie had his wish.

But after Mrs. Granger had kissed him, she slipped away and left mother and child alone; and if his mother's eyes were wet with tears when she joined the others in the drawing-room, they were happy tears.

Then followed a long talk, and much was explained on both sides as to how each, pur-

suing inquiries in different directions, had failed to notice the other. And finally Mr. Granger told the episode which had caused him to go to London, and how he had only arrived when he received a telegram saying that they were found.

“Ah!” said his father, “little did I think, when I indulged him in his whim for hiding, to what bitter results it would one day lead. But how thankful we must be to that Providence which watched over him and guided such kind hearts to his rescue.”

It was with the greatest delight that the Grangers learned that they would not altogether lose their foundling. Mr. Stanhope’s share in the business of which I have spoken rendered it necessary for him to remain in Liverpool. And as for his wife and child’s sake he preferred the suburbs to Liverpool itself, what more natural than that they should try to find a home near the Grangers, who had proved such good friends to them, especially

as the Grangers made no secret of the pleasure it would give them. Nor would they listen to the suggestion the Stanhopes made of removing to a hotel until they had found a house.

“We will count it a pleasure,” Mrs. Granger replied, when Mrs. Stanhope urged the trouble they were giving them. “You do not know how dear Georgie has become to us, and how his presence has brightened our childless home.”

The kind-hearted old lady could say this now when she knew it would only give pleasure. When she had thought she might cause pain by dwelling on the loss Georgie’s leaving would be, she had passed it over. But now that fear had been dispelled, and instead of losing they had gained; for as time passed on the attachment, born of gratitude on the one side and goodwill for Georgie’s sake on the other, deepened into lasting friendship.

Thus had the loving Father who watches over all His children brought great and

lasting good out of what had at the time seemed so great a trial.

Only one thing more remains to be told, lest any one should ask what became of Tim, who, you will remember, set out to seek his fortune in Liverpool. But fortunes are not picked up on the street, and so Tim found out. As long as the few shillings he had in his pocket lasted, he did not trouble much about finding work, but went about enjoying himself after his own fashion. But when his last shilling was spent he began to fare very badly; and as day after day passed by, he found out what seeking for work really meant. Want stared him in the face, and he was thankful to run an errand, or carry a bag from the station, or do any other job by which he could earn a few pence.

One day, a few weeks after Georgie's parents had claimed him, Tim was hanging about the station in hopes of being employed, when to his surprise he was seized by the hand, and

looking down he saw the bright face of Georgie Stanhope, who exclaimed,—

“O Tim, papa and mamma came for me; aren’t you glad?”

Georgie retained no ill-will, and took for granted that every one must share his delight, although, I am afraid, Tim’s feeling was not one of pleasure. Just then Mr. Stanhope came forward, and Georgie called to him,—

“Here’s Tim, papa; I wanted to tell him mamma and you had come for me. He didn’t think you would.”

“Did you not, my lad?” said Mr. Stanhope, laying his hand kindly on Tim’s shoulder; “and you were sorry for Georgie, I daresay.”

Tim had not sympathized very much with Georgie, but he thought it wisest not to say so, and Mr. Stanhope went on to ask what he was doing there.

Tim muttered something about being down in his luck and looking out for a job, and Mr. Stanhope’s quick eyes detected his hungry

look, so he slipped a sixpence into his hand, and with a pleasant word hurried away to catch the train.

Georgie had been allowed as a special treat to accompany his father into the town that morning; but Mr. Stanhope wished to return in time for lunch, as he knew that even yet his wife could hardly bear to allow Georgie out of her sight, and he did not wish to cause her any uneasiness by losing the train, otherwise he might have questioned Tim more closely.

Left to himself, the first thing Tim did was to spend the sixpence at an eating-house; and while he devoured the plate of meat which was set before him, he began to consider the matter. Now Georgie's parents had come for him, he wondered if Mr. Granger would not take him back again; and after thinking about it, he resolved to try. His mind made up, he lost no time in setting out, and before evening he arrived at his destination. But once the

house was in sight, his courage seemed to ooze away. What was he to do? He did not dare show his face in the village lest any one should see him and tell his father. To return to his own home never entered his head. He knew too well what sort of a welcome awaited him there.

In the morning it had seemed such an easy thing to ask Mr. Granger to take him back, but now that the time had come he could not pluck up courage to go to the door and ask to see him. At length he slipped round by the back, and made his way to the stables. Nero gave a growl, but a word quietened him, and Tim sat down beside him and wondered what he would do next. Nero, at least, was glad to see him; he pushed his head close to him and wagged his tail. Would any one else welcome him? Tim wondered. Perhaps he hadn't given any one much cause, or he needn't have been so doubtful.

However, he wasn't left to wonder long.

Presently he heard Georgie come running down the path to pay Nero a visit.

As soon as he saw Tim, he called out,—

“O Tim, have you come back again? I am so glad! Are you going to stay here again?”

“I don’t know, Master Georgie; perhaps the master won’t take me back,” said Tim doubtfully.

“Oh yes, I think grandpa will,” answered Georgie; “he was sorry to-day when papa told him he had seen you.”

“Perhaps he would if you asked him,” said Tim.

“Come along then,” said Georgie, snatching his hand.

But Tim held back. “You might go and ask him, and I’ll wait here.”

“Why, Tim, are you afraid?” asked Georgie in surprise; “never mind, I’ll go myself. I am sure grandpa will be very glad you have come back again,” and he ran off.

But Georgie had taken too much for granted. To say he was sorry for Tim, and to take him back into his service, were two different things. But Georgie pleaded so earnestly that at length Mr. Granger promised to give him another trial; and Georgie rushed off in great glee to tell Tim.

Georgie brought him back to the dining-room with him. Tim stood looking about him rather sheepishly, but every one spoke kindly to him.

“So you were sorry for our boy when you thought we would not find him?” said Mrs. Stanhope, who did not know the real facts of the case.

“No, ma’am, I wasn’t,” Tim blurted out. “I used to tease him about it; but I’m sorry I did it now.”

“That’s right, Tim,” said his master; “be honest and straightforward, and I will not regret taking you back.”

“Poor lad,” said Mr. Granger, when

Tim had been sent off to the kitchen to have a good meal, "he has not had a good example set him; but now I have taken him back, I shall make arrangements for him to stay here instead of going home at night, and if he tries to do right, help him all I can."

And Tim had learned a lesson by this time, and did not disappoint his master.

THE END.

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